

Religious and Hebrew School Handbook 2011-2012

Dear Parents,

We are so excited to start the 2011-2012 school year! We welcome you as our partners, where together we strive to provide an excellent Jewish education for our children. Working as a team we can develop a positive and strong Jewish identity in our children, within a nurturing community. The school provides an interactive learning experience, which allows all students to feel involved, safe, and proud.

Temple Sinai Religious School provides its students with Jewish knowledge, and at the same time prepares them with the all important leadership skills necessary for the Jewish community and beyond. Our teachers are professional, enthusiastic, optimistic, and loving. They place the students' needs first, and use creative and effective teaching styles for individual and group learning.

However, none of this can be accomplished without our amazing parent volunteers and dedicated members of the Education Committee, under the leadership of Barbara Shepard. These lay leaders have provided an immeasurable amount of support and guidance in shaping the school, as we know it today. If you are interested in lending a hand or ensuring the future of our incredible programming, please don't hesitate to contact us.

As the year progresses, we hope that each of you finds joy in your child's Jewish learning. If you have any feedback, please feel free to let us know. Let's make it a great year!

*L'shalom,
Rabbi Annie Belford
Rina Mesarwi, Education Director*

CLASS SCHEDULE

SUNDAY MORNINGS

3-YEAR OLDS: 9:15 – 10:30 AM

(Meets 2x/month)

PRE-K – 3rd GRADE: 9:15 – 10:30 AM

4th – 7th GRADE: 9:00 – 10:30 AM 10:45 – 12:15 PM (Meets 2x/month)

8th – 9th GRADE: 10:45 – 12:15 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

4th – 7th GRADE: 6:45 – 8:00 PM

10th GRADE: 6:45 – 8:00 PM

11th – 12th GRADE: 6:45 – 8:00 PM

TEACHER ROSTER

Teacher Grade (Room #)

Ellen Heller 3-Year Olds (9)
Debbie Schultz-Cevera Pre-K and Kindergarten (6)
Rachel Wallach 1st (4)
Marla Hansel 2nd and 3rd (3)
Eliezer Kepecs 4th and Hebrew I (2/2)
Fiona Schicker 5th, 8th and Hebrew IV (1/3/Sanctuary)

Iris Rochman 6th (7)
Diane Adler 7th and Hebrew II (8/4)
Linda Farber 9th (3)
Karen Kessler Hebrew III (1)
Rabbi Annie Belford Confirmation and Hebrew IV (7/Sanctuary)
Speakers Post Confirmation 10 & 11 (5)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Temple Sinai Religious School is to be the gateway for Jewish education for our children. We strive to provide opportunities for fellowship and friendship in a welcoming and nurturing environment for our students. Our goal is to inspire and educate all students so that they will have a solid Jewish foundation for years to come. We encourage students to develop their unique Jewish identities through long life learning, worship, *Torah* study and the performance of *G'milut Hassidim* (acts of loving-kindness).

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

Hebrew School

The Hebrew Curriculum is designed to enable students to feel comfortable learning the role of Hebrew in Jewish heritage, and to read prayers and blessings accurately. Students learn to understand key words and concepts in prayers, and become more fluent and confident with Hebrew before becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Classes meet twice a week on Wednesday and Sunday. The students participate in *B'nai Mitzvah* workshops with their parents. They meet with the Rabbi and the Hebrew tutors. Other aspects of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* preparation are included in our *B'nai Mitzvah* Policy handbook.

Religious School

The Religious School Curriculum is designed to enhance the Jewish Identity of each student through the understanding of *Torah*, Jewish History, and Holiday celebrations. We provide opportunities for children to develop spiritual and ethical sensitivity and learn the skills to practice *Mitzvot* for *Tikkun Olam* (Repair the World) in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating Jewish community. Our curriculum emphasizes the importance of Israel to the Jewish people, and helps the student to understand the essential principles of Reform Judaism. We welcome children from all levels of backgrounds and experiences. Our school assumes that students attend Religious School through the high school years.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Academics: Parents and students should acquaint themselves with the curricular objectives for the appropriate grade. Progress reports will be mailed home twice a year for Hebrew classes and once a year for Kindergarten – 7th Grade in Religious school. If remediation is necessary, it will be provided during school hours whenever possible. Please inform the Education Director of your child's special learning, medical or developmental needs, and arrange a discussion with the child's teacher.

Arrivals and Departures: Please see the class schedules for arrival and departure times. **Drop-Off and Pick-Up will continue to be located at the Main Entrance of the Temple only.** Prompt arrival and departure once class is over is greatly appreciated.

Attendance: The religious school offers the classes, provides qualified teachers, and prepares our children appropriately for their *B'nai Mitzvah* ceremonies. In order for this process to succeed, parents must ensure their children's regular attendance in Religious School classes. If your child is in grade 4 through 7 and preparing for *B'nai Mitzvah*, they must attend 80% of the Hebrew and Religious classes in each semester. If a child misses more than 5 classes by the end of a semester, the parents will be contacted. The student will not be allowed to continue with the class in the next semester unless the student studies with a Hebrew tutor approved by the Education Director and at the family's expense, in order to make up missed material. Parents will be provided with a list of the material their child must learn and a list of approved tutors. Once the student has made up the work and been evaluated by the Education Director, he/she will be allowed to rejoin his/her class at the start of the next term.

Cancellation of class: In the event of severe weather or other emergency, notice of school cancellation will be emailed to each family and a message will be left on the Temple Sinai answering machine (please call 281.496.5950) by 5:00 pm on Wednesday evening or 7:30 am on Sunday morning.

Enrollment: In order to enroll a child in the Religious School, the parent must be a member in good standing of Temple Sinai. All students (except Jewish day school students) must be enrolled in Religious School for grades 4 -7 in order to celebrate *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at Temple Sinai.

Guest Policy / Visiting the Classroom: Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom, however, we request prior notification. If your child wishes to bring a friend or relative to class, permission must be obtained in advance from the teacher. You **must** be reachable while the guest is on the premises.

Homework: While we recognize the stress that many of our students feel over their busy schedules, regular practice of Hebrew is essential for mastery. Please encourage your child to take all assignments seriously. Your support, interest and encouragement will have a tremendous effect on your child's attitude towards Jewish learning.

Illness: Should your child become ill while at school, we will gladly dispense band-aids and TLC, but we will not administer any medication (including aspirin and Tylenol) **without a note from the parent.** When necessary, we will contact the parent, or others listed on the emergency

form, to pick-up the child. **Make sure your emergency contact information is current on the Registration Form!**

Personal Prayer Book: Each 6th grade Hebrew student will be presented with his or her own personal prayer book from which to study.

Proper Attire: During all Religious School functions (Sunday, Wednesday and *Shabbat*), students are expected to dress in clothing that brings honor and respect to the synagogue. Note: Baseball caps are not to be worn.

Safety and Security: In our continuing effort towards Safety and Security for our children while they are at school, we will be continuing our Parent Parking Lot Duties and Drop-Off and Pick-Up procedures. **Drop-Off and Pick-Up will continue to be located at the Main Entrance of the Temple only.** All parents are requested to volunteer for these duties throughout the school year. (Please refer to School Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures for more information).

Snacks: Students may purchase a snack during their break on Sunday mornings from 10:30-10:45 AM. The cost per snack is \$2.00 which includes a bagel, cream cheese, and orange juice (coffee for adults). Parents may order bagels for \$10.00 a dozen or \$6.00 for half a dozen. These orders must be pre-paid, with checks made out to Temple Sinai. Homeroom parents will be contacting their respective class parents to volunteer for the snack bar.

Tzedakah: Giving is an important *Mitzvah* (commandment) of Jewish life. Each session, money for *Tzedakah* (literally: "righteousness") is collected from the students, and each class decides where the money will be donated at the end of the year. Please take time to discuss this *mitzvah* with your child, and encourage your child to give a portion of his/her own money.

Rabbi Akiva said:

"Everything is foreseen, yet free will is granted;

By goodness is the universe judged, yet all depends on the preponderance of [good] deeds..."

Pirke Avot 3:1

BRIT (Covenant) of BEHAVIOR

Temple Sinai provides a meaningful, informative, and creative Jewish education. Each student shall commit to the *Brit* (covenant) of Behavior.

As a student in Temple Sinai's Religious School, I commit to the following:

Remembering that when I come to Temple Sinai, I am entering a holy space, *Kehilah K'doshah*.

Treating my teachers, Education Director, Rabbi, and all adults with respect, with *Derech Eretz*.

Treating all fellow students with respect, with *Derech Eretz*.

Treating the building with respect. This means I will not run in the halls, cause damage to any part of the building, and make sure it stays clean.

Consequences for Breaking *Brit* of Behavior

As a Jewish school, Temple Sinai Religious School considers each child to be created *b'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God). We care for and trust all of our students. Our goal is to provide a meaningful Jewish education and to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The following steps have been created to encourage students to act at all times as though they were created *b'tzelem Elohim* and to offer opportunities for *Teshuvah* (to make amends if another person is hurt).

- **Step 1:** For the first incident, the teacher will handle it in the classroom and the Education Director will be notified.
- **Step 2:** If the student again breaks the *Brit* of Behavior, the student will be sent to the Education Director's office. The Education Director will discuss the behavior with the student and follow up with a phone call to the student's parents.
- **Step 3:** In the case of a third incident, the student will be sent to the Education Director and the parents will be contacted at that time to discuss the disruptive behavior. A mandatory conference with the Education Director, teacher, parents, and student will be scheduled to implement a Plan of Action before the student is allowed to return to class. (A Plan of Action may include requiring the parents to attend class sessions with the student.)

It will be at the discretion of the Education Director, in consultation with the Rabbi and the VP of Education, to go immediately to Step 3 if warranted.

Serious Infractions

Certain offenses will result in immediate removal from the school:

- Extreme disregard of Religious School rules
- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, harmful or dangerous objects
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Smoking
- Violence or threat of violence to others
- Placing self and/or other students in danger

Please note:

- If a student intentionally or unintentionally damages Temple Sinai property, the student and his/her family will be required to reimburse Temple Sinai for the full cost of repair and/or replacement.
- All electronics, including cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, etc., must be off and out of sight during class sessions.

Simon the Just...used to say,

“Upon three things the world stands: On Torah, on [Divine] Service, and on deeds of Loving kindness.”

Pirke Avot 1:2

School Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

In our continuing effort to improve Safety and Security for our children while they are at school, we will be continuing our Parent Parking Lot Duties and Drop-Off and Pick-Up procedures. Drop-Off and Pick-Up is located at the Main Entrance of the Temple, rather than the side entrance by the classrooms. The driveway in front of the Main Entrance is 3 lanes wide, which

will allow for one lane entering and 2 lanes for exiting. Only the Main Entrance will be accessible for entering the building during Drop-Off. The Teachers will be directing the children to exit through the Main Entrance during Pick-Up. We are asking that everyone adhere to this procedure. **Please do not Drop-Off or Pick-Up your children in any location except the Main Entrance.** We encourage you to walk your children into school. Please park in one of the designated parking spaces and walk them through the Main Entrance. In addition, we will continue to have parent volunteers help provide traffic control and security during Drop-Off and Pick-Up:

- Sundays – 8:45-9:15 AM
- Sundays – 10:15-10:45 AM
- Wednesdays – 6:30-7:00 PM
- Wednesdays – 7:45-8:15 PM

Responsibilities include:

- Placing traffic cones in the drive area
- Helping to keep traffic moving
- Ensuring that all students have been picked up at the end of class

MILESTONE EVENTS

CONSECRATION

Study, knowledge, learning and *Torah* make up the foundation of our Jewish tradition. Throughout the years, it has been a source of pride for parents when their children began to engage in Jewish learning. They celebrate this milestone with a custom known as Consecration. In our Reform tradition, Consecration is the ceremony, which marks the beginning of a child's formal Jewish education. At Temple Sinai, Consecration is held in during the observance of *Simchat Torah*. Children who are attending Religious School for the first time march up to the *Bima* and stand before the Ark to recite the *Shema* and to receive a blessing from the Rabbi.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the Hebrew term meaning "son/daughter of the commandment", a person who is accountable for the observance of the *Mitzvot* or commandments of Judaism. It is a *mitzvah* to educate our children in the heritage of Israel so that they begin to learn the ways of our *Torah* and to live a Jewish life, thereby fulfilling the spiritual destiny of the Jewish people.

In our Reform tradition, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a significant life cycle event, which is shared by the student, the family, and the community. Traditionally, a young person becomes *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at age 13, but we at Temple Sinai believe that this achievement is also available to anyone above the age of 13 who wishes to study the Jewish tradition and Hebrew language. Policies and requirements for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* may be found in the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* handbook, which is distributed at a *Shabbaton* attended by *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* candidates and their families. ***In order to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a student must be enrolled concurrently in both Religious School and Hebrew School.***

We at Temple Sinai believe that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony is not the culmination of formal Jewish education, but rather one of the many customs and ceremonies that lead to a complete Jewish upbringing. Students are encouraged to continue their Religious School studies through Post Confirmation.

CONFIRMATION

Historically, Confirmation was Reform Judaism's attempt to replace the traditional *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* with a more mature observance for both boys and girls at an age when they could better comprehend their place in the Jewish community and in their congregation. In the past, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* often meant the end of Jewish education for many children. Confirmation extended the course of study to the high school level (grade 10). The ceremony takes place at the end of the school year on the Festival of *Shavuot*, the holiday, which commemorates the Jewish experience at Mount Sinai, when our ancestors affirmed their faith upon receiving the *Torah*. ***In order to participate in Confirmation, students must attend classes from 7th through 10th grades.*** If a student drops out of the Religious School program at any time during that period, he/she will be Confirmed only at the discretion of the Rabbi and the Education Director. The curriculum for the Confirmation class attempts to develop insight and understanding of Judaism so that Confirmation will reflect a true Jewish identification, an understanding of basic Judaism, and a personally motivated Jewish theology.

POST CONFIRMATION

Post Confirmation class consists of 11th and 12th grades. Students meet every other Wednesday from 6:45 - 8:00 pm. The students have the opportunity to study together, to socialize, to listen to speakers on different topics, and participate in discussions. At the beginning of each session, they enjoy dinner together. The topics and speakers vary. Students have two sessions on "Being a Jewish Student in College", and the challenges they might face. Other sessions include: Jews in Texas prisons, the tradition of Jewish burial, how to handle abusive relationships, sex education, informative session on Jewish organization in Houston, learning about Conservative and Orthodox Judaism, learning about other faiths and visiting different non-Jewish religious organizations. The students of 12th grade have a special graduation ceremony that is held during a Friday night service at which all graduates receive a special gift.

Religious School Curriculum

Temple Sinai Religious School holds classes for 3 year olds through ninth grade all of which are held on Sunday mornings. Confirmation and Post Confirmation classes meet on Wednesday evenings. The staff consists of a Religious School Director, the Rabbi and teachers. Hebrew classes are offered separately, and meet twice weekly on Sundays and Wednesdays (see description under Hebrew Curriculum).

3-YEAR OLDS

This class meets twice a month. The students learn about the Jewish Holidays through hands on activities.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN & KINDERGARTEN

At this level, the primary focus is to introduce the children to all the holidays – their observances, symbols, and customs - through songs, games, and arts and crafts projects. Holidays are introduced by a sensory approach, so that the children can relate to the holidays personally. Children also study the concept of *Tzedakah* and its importance in Jewish tradition. Students use "Let's Discover Holidays" Fall and Spring packets to enhance their learning. Students participate in the *Matzah* Factory Workshop.

FIRST GRADE

The students in first grade study all of the holidays in the Jewish year in a greater depth than the 3 Year Olds. The origins, customs, values, *Mitzvot*, foods, and songs associated with each holiday are presented. The children gain an understanding of the history of the holidays and ceremonial observances in the synagogue and home. Students' use:

- "Let's Discover Holidays" Fall and Spring packets
- "Building Jewish Life". Students participate in the *Matzah* Factory Workshop.

SECOND GRADE

In this grade level the students use the *Chai* curriculum that was developed by the Union of Reform Judaism. The "Learning for Jewish Life" curriculum goal is to enable students to draw direct connections between *Torah* study and their lives. This curriculum helps the students to understand that *Torah* study is a lifelong and ongoing process. Students discuss several issues during the year, for example:

- Who wrote the *Torah*?
- How do we know that God exists?
- Did God create the World?

Students use Level 2 of "Learning for Jewish Life" curriculum. Students participate in the *Matzah* Factory Workshop.

THIRD GRADE

In the third grade, the students continue studying from the *Chai* curriculum. Its educational initiative addresses Jewish learning as a lifelong pursuit. The sessions enhance the student's ability to grow as a Jewish teen and adult. It provides the framework within which Jews build their relationship with God, with one another, and with the world. The approach in teaching the students this curriculum ensures that students' learning goes beyond the specific classroom activities and leads to deeper understanding of Jewish learning and living. Students use Level 3 of "Learning For Jewish Life". All students and their parents participate in the *Havdallah* Workshop.

FOURTH GRADE

Discussions about our relationship with God, how to help other Jews around the world, and how to take care of our world are just a few of the topics that the students encounter in the fourth grade. It is the third year of students' learning from the *Chai* curriculum, which was developed by the Union of Reform Judaism. This curriculum provides our students with the tools to examine a wide variety of Jewish values in our world. This curriculum is challenging to students, yet it ensures effectiveness in learning the intended concepts. The students use Level 4 of "Learning For Jewish Life". All students and parents participate in a workshop of "The *Shofar* Factory" and bring home their own *Shofar*.

FIFTH GRADE

Students in fifth grade begin to explore the *Torah* through class discussions from Genesis and into Exodus. These class discussions introduce Jewish values and ethics on an age-appropriate level. Through this study, the students have a sense of connection to Jewish life, culture, and tradition. The lessons consist of an overall view of the *Torah* and how to apply its lessons to everyday life. The lessons include study of text, lecture, and discussion, as well as enrichment of each lesson through art and games. The students use the "*Chumash*" as their text. All students and their parents participate in the "Olive Press" workshop in which they learn the process of making olive oil.

SIXTH GRADE

In this grade level we make Israel and its history meaningful to the students who are growing up outside the land of Israel. The students learn the story of the Jewish people and their homeland from the biblical period through statehood in 1948, to the Camp David accords and later agreements with neighboring Arab states. The students engage in discussions about the current situation in Israel and the history of the Intifada. They learn the importance of Israel to Jews around the world as a symbol, a refuge, and a homeland. Students study from "A Young Person's History of Israel" by David Bamberger. All students and their parents participate in the *Tallit* Workshop, which enhances their understanding of why Jews wear *Tallit*.

SEVENTH GRADE

This yearlong study of the Holocaust includes class discussions, photographs, maps, and other artifacts of the concentration camps. The study is designed to help the students recognize that hatred and prejudice are aspects of human nature, which stem from fear and insecurity. It provides the students with the opportunity to explore the spiritual challenges that people face after traumatic experiences. It helps the students to understand the horrors of the Holocaust, while exploring ethical issues of right and wrong and good and evil. Students use the "Diary of Anne Frank", "Shadows Of The Holocaust", "The Holocaust - A History of Courage and Resistance", and the critical reading - "Don't Believe Everything You Read". Students and their parents visit the Holocaust Museum.

EIGHTH GRADE and NINTH GRADE

The students in these grade levels participate in *Gesher* Houston. This exciting program is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, and consists of six congregations of suburban Houston and Beaumont. *Gesher* Houston provides the students with a *Gesher* ("Bridge" in Hebrew) to Jewish adulthood by offering a new way to experience religious school. The students learn from a curriculum that is specially designed to stimulate their exploration of what being Jewish means to them. In addition to studying the curriculum at their own synagogues, the students from all the *Gesher* congregations join together four times during the year for special community gatherings or *Kallot*. The *Kallot* provide a larger community of peers for these students from smaller congregations; peers who are wrestling with the same issues and questions about Judaism. The two components of the *Gesher* program are designed to complement each other. Each *Kallah* explores subjects that have recently been or are about to be discussed in class. The result is that the classroom materials prepare the students for the upcoming *Kallah*. All students use *Gesher* materials for their curriculum

Eighth Grade *Gesher* Houston

The eighth grade curriculum is composed of three units:

- Unit 1: The Community and My Role focuses on the concept of community. As Jews we are commanded to be responsible members of a community. During this section of the course our students explore their relationships with their classmates, their families, and their friends.
- Unit 2: Jewish Ethics and Values - Why Should I be Good? focuses on the Ten Commandments as a guide to how one should behave. The materials presented during this part of the course don't teach the students what to do, but rather they help the students develop a personal way to make ethical decisions.
- In Unit 3: Social Action - What Good Can I Do? The principles that the students have learned are put into practice. We apply Jewish ethics and values to contemporary issues. Some of the issues we cover include: the ecology, euthanasia, addiction,

abortion, and *Tzedakah*. The students are also involved in a Social Action project of their own design.

Ninth Grade Gesher Houston

The ninth grade curriculum is composed of four units:

- Unit 1: Jewish Identity - A Personal Journey focuses on the concept of identity. The students examine the influences of their community, their country, and the world on their individuality, and on their Jewish Identity.
- Unit 2: Jews Among the Nations asks the questions "Who are you? What do you think? What are your concerns? How do you express your Jewish Identity?". The students are then challenged to answer these most basic questions about being Jewish.
- Unit 3: Confronting Our Past, Facing Our Present - Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust presents the students with the roots of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and anti-Semitism. They examine how these attitudes can manifest themselves in very hurtful and destructive ways. They then trace how prejudice and racism are connected to the Holocaust.
- Unit 4: Israel - Land, People, or State? Examines the roots of our existence. The students start with the promise made to Abraham and Sarah that the Jews would be given the land of Canaan as a homeland. The students then explore how it was that our people entered and possessed this land, were later exiled from this land, and eventually returned to it in the 20th century.

Students participate in *Mitzvah* projects such as making blankets for babies at LBJ Hospital and preparing Passover bags for patients at the Medical Center.

TENTH GRADE -CONFIRMATION CLASS

Rabbi Annie Belford teaches the Confirmation class. Taught in an interactive and engaging atmosphere in a seminar style class, students spend part of the year learning about Reform Judaism and part of the year learning about different views of God. In the first semester, students learn about the unique views of Reform Judaism, with an emphasis on Reform Jewish connections to Israel and the importance of social action. We then apply our knowledge to current events, looking at "Reform Judaism and... Tattoos," "Reform Judaism and... War and Peace," and "Reform Judaism and... Evolution." Students take a vote to determine these "hot topics." In the second semester, we focus on different theologies. We explore our own beliefs about God, and then look at a number of different issues that gently challenge these beliefs. At the end of our studies, students spend time learning about one Jewish theologian, then creatively presenting their theologian's views to the class. Students are confirmed on *Erev Shavuot* in a special ceremonial service they create and lead themselves.

ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH GRADE - POST CONFIRMATION

Post Confirmation class consists of 11th and 12th grades. Students meet every other Wednesday from 6:45 - 8:00 pm. The students have the opportunity to study together, to socialize, to listen to speakers on different topics, and participate in discussions. At the beginning of each session, they enjoy dinner together. The topics and speakers vary. Students have two sessions on "Being a Jewish Student in College", and the challenges they might face. Other sessions include: Jews in Texas prisons, the tradition of Jewish burial, how to handle abusive relationships, sex education, informative session on Jewish organization in Houston, learning about Conservative and Orthodox Judaism, learning about other faiths and visiting different non-Jewish religious organizations. The students of 12th grade have a special graduation ceremony that is held during a Friday night service at which all graduates receive a special gift.

Hebrew School Curriculum

The Hebrew Curriculum is designed to enable students to feel comfortable learning the role of Hebrew in Jewish heritage, and to read prayers and blessings accurately. Students learn to understand key words and concepts in prayers, and become more fluent and confident with Hebrew reading before becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Classes meet twice a week on Wednesday and Sunday. The students participate in *B'nai Mitzvah Shabbaton* with their parents. At the *Shabbaton* they meet with the Rabbi, the Education Director, and the Hebrew teacher and receive the student's prayer book and the parents' *B'nai Mitzvah* policy handbook. Other aspects of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* preparation are included in our *B'nai Mitzvah* Policy handbook.

Hebrew I - Fourth Grade

The students in this level use the "*Zeman LI'Kroe*" series ("Time to Read Hebrew"). Each lesson in this book contains some key words that are made up of new letters and vowels. The students sound out some words formed from the new letters and vowels. This method allows the students to read more Hebrew, to write it, and understand its meaning. By the end of the year the students are able to sound out all the letters and vowels. Some of the blessings studied at this level are: candles, short *Kiddush*, *Ha'Motzie*, *Chanukah*, *Torah* study, *Tallit*, and *She'Hechyanu*.

Hebrew II - Fifth Grade

The students in this level use the "*Heneini - Hebrew Through Prayer*" series, which includes material designed to stimulate discussions. These discussions deepen our students' understanding of Jewish rituals and concepts in doing *Mitzvot*. Reading exercises and enrichment activities aid students in developing reading fluency and allowing active participation in the classroom setting. The "Hebrew Through Prayer" approach encourages students to sharpen their reading skills, and develop recognition of important roots and vocabulary words within the assigned Hebrew prayers and blessings. Some of the prayers the students work on are: *Barchu*, *Shema*, *Mi Chamocha*, The Four Questions, *Ve'Ahavta*, and Full *Kiddush*.

Hebrew III - Sixth Grade

The students in this level use a prayer book as their study text. They use Hebrew reading selections that improve their reading skills and encourage participation in the rituals of home and synagogue. The students read with accuracy, and comprehend concepts in the assigned prayers and blessings. Some of the prayers they work on are: chanting *Ve'Ahavta*, Reader's *Kaddish*, *Torah* Blessings, *Haftarah* Blessings, and *Amidah*. Rabbi Belford, the Education Director and teachers meet with students and their parents mid-year for an informative *Shabbaton*. Students and parents are provided with a *B'nai Mitzvah* handbook that includes all the information needed for the celebration of their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Hebrew IV - Seventh Grade

About a year before the student's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, they attend this level that is designed to prepare them for this important event. The students work on all the prayers, blessings, *Torah*, and *Haftarah* readings. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* class is taught and supervised by two teachers. At this time the students review all the prayers including *Ma'ariv Aravim*, *Yotzer Or*, *Torah*, and *Haftarah* portions. During the year students have the opportunity to spend more time in "One on One" situations with their teachers and tutors. They study their *Torah* portion and practice their *Haftarah* reading, and with the encouragement and help of the Rabbi, they prepare their speech.

Hillel used to say:

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

Pirke Avot 1:14

Temple Sinai Education Calendar for 2011-2012

SEPTEMBER 2011

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: September 11, 18 and 25

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: September 14, 21 and 28

September 11 Orientation Meeting with all parents and students at 9 a.m. All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

September 14 All Classes in Session

September 18 All Classes in Session

September 21 All Classes + Post Confirmation

September 25 Rosh Hashanah Celebration (All Grades) Shofar Factory (4th grade only – 9 a.m.)

All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

September 28 No Religious School- Erev Rosh Hashanah

OCTOBER 2011

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: October 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: October 5, 12, 19 and 26

October 2 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

October 5 All Classes + Post Confirmation

October 9 No Religious School- Yom Kippur

October 12 **No School – Erev Sukkot**

October 16 Sukkot Celebration (All Grades) All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

October 19 **No School - Consecration at 6:45 p.m.**

October 23 All Classes in Session

October 26 All Classes + Post Confirmation

October 30 Havdallah Workshop (3rd Grade only) + All classes in session

NOVEMBER 2011

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: November 6, 13, 20

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: November 2, 9, 16, 30

Gesher Shabbaton – Saturday morning: November 12

November 2 All Classes

November 6 Family Day at JCC Book Fair (thru 2nd Grade) Green Family Camp Retreat - (2nd and 3rd Grades only) All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

November 9 School Closed for Book Fair Event

November 12 Gesher Shabbaton (8th and 9th Grades)

November 13 All Classes

November 16 All Classes + Post Confirmation

November 20 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

November 23 and 27 No School- Thanksgiving Holiday

November 30 All Classes + Post Confirmation

DECEMBER 2011

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: December 4, 11

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: 7, 14

December 4 All Classes

December 7 All Classes

December 11 Olive Press (5th Grade only) Chanukah Celebration (Entire School) All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

December 14 All Classes + Post Confirmation

December 18, 21, 25, and 28 No School- Winter Break

JANUARY 2012

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: January 8, 15, 22 and 29

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: January 4, 11, 18 and 25

Green Family Camp Shabbaton – Friday night: January 20

January 1 No School- Winter Break

January 4 School resumes

January 8 Tallit Workshop (6th Grade only) All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

January 11 All Classes + Post Confirmation

January 15 All Classes

January 18 All Classes

January 20 Green Family Camp Shabbaton (2nd – 7th Grades)

January 22 All Classes

January 25 All Classes + Post Confirmation

January 29 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

FEBRUARY 2012

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: February 5, 12, and 26

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: February 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

February 1 All Classes

February 5 Tu B' Shevat Seder (10 a.m. – noon) All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

February 8 All Classes + Post Confirmation

February 12 Mezuzah Workshop (K – 2nd Grades) + All Classes

February 15 All Classes

February 19 No School – Yom Limmud

February 22 All Classes + Post Confirmation

February 26 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

February 29 All Classes

MARCH 2012

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: March 4 and 25

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: March 7, 21 and 28

March 4 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

March 7 All Classes + Post Confirmation Purim Celebration

March 11, 14 and 18 No School- Spring Break

March 21 All Classes + Post Confirmation

March 25 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

March 28 All Classes

APRIL 2012

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: April 1, 15, 22 and 29

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: April 4, 18 and 25
Post Confirmation Graduation - Friday: April 27

April 1 Passover Seder (Entire School) All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

April 4 All Classes + Post Confirmation

April 8 and 11 No School- Passover

April 15 All Classes

April 18 Yom Hashoah Program

April 22 Yom Ha'atzma'ut Celebration All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

April 25 All Classes + Post Confirmation

April 27 (Friday) Post Confirmation Graduation (7:30 p.m.)

April 29 All Classes

MAY 2012

Religious School Sessions - Sunday: May 6 and 13

Hebrew School Sessions - Wednesday: May 2 and 9

Confirmation – Saturday: 26

May 2 All Classes

May 6 All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

May 9 Last Day of Hebrew School

May 13 Last Day of Religious School All Classes + Class for 3 Year Olds

May 26 (Saturday) Confirmation